

Early the next morning we found that our army had moved in the direction of the Potomac, and we were acting as the rear guard. Many times during the day our regiment was formed into line across the road, as the army fell back towards Sharpsburg. The enemy came in sight several times but did not attack.

When we reached the top of the hill above Sharpsburg, where the Federal cemetery now is, we found a considerable part of the army resting there. Lee and his staff were there, and soon a courier arrived bringing news of the capture of Harper's Ferry. About that time the enemy were seen placing a battery in the fields north of the Antietam. They began throwing shells. The camp followers were soon going further towards Virginia. But, under the direction of Gen Lee, the different commands were deploying into line. He was retreating no longer.

Our brigade was carried west, along the Hagerstown road, to the Dunkard Church—St. Mumma's—where the Smoketown road branches off to the North. Forming our line along the Hagerstown road we remained there during the rest of that day, the 15th of September, and on the 16th until late in the evening. Then the cavalry reported that the enemy were moving with strong lines and coming up in front of us. Our lines were then pushed forward in the direction of the Smoketown road some distance, perhaps a quarter of a mile. Our regiment was on the east side of Smoketown road along a fence and skirt of woods, known as East woods in the accounts of the battle. Sometime after dark a line of men was discovered moving along our front from our right towards our left, so unconcernedly that they were at first supposed to be Confederates, but when they were hailed and found to be enemies one volley from our line scattered them and we were not molested further that night.

At sometime during the night, perhaps about 1 or 2 o'clock, we were carried back to (what was then) woods near the Dunkard Church. It is now a cleared field. Here

we were told to rest. But early in the morning of the 17th, when it was hardly light, the battle opened.

Our position, though we were then in the second line, was a very trying one. The enemy's guns in our front poured shot and shell into us whilst we were exposed to a cross-fire from his long-range guns, posted on the north-east side of Antietam Creek. The infantry in our front were soon engaged. There was an incessant roar of cannonading and the roll of musketry was terrific. Wounded men were going back through our lines by scores. The battle was raging awfully. Our line was called into action, and moved to the front up the Smoketown road and between it and the Hagerstown pike. The front line had made a noble stand, but they were being pressed back. The enemy, with fresh lines, were pushing forward when we met them. Here it was that, for the first time in the war, I saw our men fix their bayonets in action, which they did at the command of Gen. Hood, who was riding up and down the line. We broke their line and held our place for a while, but the enemy was bringing up fresh columns and overlapping our left, and we were forced back.

The enemy seemed to be overcoming us, until our left was reinforced by troops that were ordered up from our right. They engaged the enemy and drove them back again to the north of the Dunkard Church, and our lines were re-established. There was no further heavy fighting on that part of the line. The heavy fighting in the afternoon was near the stone bridge east of the town.

If the future historian will study the battle of Sharpsburg, the positions of the two armies and the number of troops belonging to each, he will be forced to conclude that it should be considered one of the most noted battles of the war, and that Lee's army covered itself with glory there.

Remaining on the field during the afternoon and night of the 17th and all day of the 18th without any renewal of attack, the army on the night of the 18th moved across the Potomac into Virginia.